

Today's News - Monday, January 17, 2011

- ArcSpace brings us lots more info on DS+R's The Broad, and travels to New Orleans for the first time.
- In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Becker introduces us to one of Chicago's "most strikingly modern churches" that played a pivotal role in the city's own important civil rights battles.
- PLANetizen rounds up the Top Planning Issues of 2010: "It was a year of making more with less, and diminished expectations," though some "forward-thinking ideals" gained ground.
- Berg looks at Burning Man as "one of the most ambitious visions of utopian urbanism in existence today" that "could be instructive to urban thinkers elsewhere."
- Cheek chats with a few of the small to midsize U.S. firms who are "enjoying a startling boom in Chinese projects."
- Hume x 2: while there's a "growing realization that sprawl cannot be sustained...one jurisdiction has woken up and smelt the exhaust"; sadly, others "sold themselves to developers long ago and cannot break free."
- He has higher hopes for Toronto's "broken boulevard" and a design competition that could open avenues to "improvement, innovation and imagination" (borrowing a few cans of paint from Sadik-Khan could be a good start).
- An AIA Utah competition has high hopes of temporarily transforming an empty lot in downtown Salt Lake City into something more than urban blight for the next two years.
- D'Arcy on a "mega-church meltdown": the Crystal Cathedral may have to sell off its architectural icons ("If I were choosing, the Meier building would be the first on the block").
- Moore has high hopes that the battle to save Melnikov's Moscow house "may at last be coming to an end. And not a moment too soon...One of the great houses of the 20th century is at stake, and a piece of Moscow's soul" (great slide show).
- Schumacher calls for additional design review and refinement with Marriott proposal in Milwaukee: though she sees merit in the project, "It'd be a shame to tear down buildings of character to make room for something so lacking in it."
- Brussat at his best bemoaning the fate of a 1901 red brick schoolhouse: "When writing about architecture and preservation in Providence, a sense of the absurd comes in handy...a textbook example of the fox guarding the chicken coop."
- Bernstein on a former garage in L.A. transformed by Giovannini, who has created the illusion "that I've painted space rather than painted walls."
- Q&A with Balmond re: leaving Arup for his own practice, balancing business concerns with creativity, and the next generation of architects.
- Arief on the "Taxi of Tomorrow" competition: the "bar wasn't set all that high" and the finalists are, "well, dull. Boxy. Lacking in imagination" - but she found a "conjuror of 'ludicrous' ideas" who offers some ideas - "some pragmatic, some dystopic, others clearly silly" (great slide show!).
- Impressive shortlists for both the Mies van der Rohe Award and the Design Museum Brit Insurance Design Awards.
- One we couldn't resist: Should designers work for free? "Short answer: hell #\$%*ing no. (Unless it's for your mom.)"

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-- Diller Scofidio + Renfro: The Broad, Los Angeles
-- Travel: New Orleans: Soniat House, The French Quarter + "Architecture in Times of Need: Make it Right - Rebuilding the New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward"

Modern Struggles, Modern Design - Dr. King and the story of Liberty Baptist Church: On the day we celebrate the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we remember how some of Chicago's most important civil rights battles centered around one of the city's most strikingly modern churches. By Lynn Becker -- William N. Alderman/Tideman & Connel (1956) [images]- Repeat (Chicago)

Top Planning Issues of 2010: ...the most fascinating, pervasive and popular planning trends...It was a year of making more with less, and diminished expectations...forward-thinking ideals of current urban planning – walkability, bike infrastructure, renewable energy, expanded transit – gained significant ground. [links]- PLANetizen

Burning Man and the Metropolis: With its high-resolution urban plan...feels like a slice of modern urban life, and in some ways an improvement...one of the most ambitious visions of utopian urbanism in existence today...could be instructive to urban thinkers elsewhere...It's city-making at the individual level. By Nate Berg [images, links]- Places Journal

Architects Find Their Dream Client, in China: ...scores of small to midsize architectural practices...are enjoying a startling boom...Although a handful of big firms...have extended global tentacles for generations, it has been only in the last half-dozen years that Chinese projects have gushed down to their smaller brethren. By Lawrence W. Cheek -- Stuart Silk Architects; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); HOK; Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects; Chris McVoy/Steven Holl Architects; Les Wallach/Line and Space; Goetsch Partners; Heller Manus Architects; Olson Kundig Architects [images]- New York Times

Resisting the Call of Sprawl: There's growing realization that sprawl cannot be sustained, but it's too late for many. They will cling to the wreckage for as long as they can. The big question is how many will go down with them. Urban or suburban, we sink or swim together. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Big dreams for Toronto's broken boulevard: ...wandering the length of John Street, one is struck by how many opportunities it presents for improvement, innovation and imagination. If we were to adopt the strategy pioneered by Janette Sadik-Khan...the possibilities become endless...couldn't cyclists and pedestrians share space? Or is that asking too much? Probably. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Design competition injects art into empty lot: ...Salt Lake City's downtown might have been blighted with another empty lot for up to two years. Instead, the AIA Utah launched the competition for a temporary public art design that brought more than 60 entries from designers in 13 countries. -- Daniel Lyman; David Brach/Hannah Vaughn/Scott Yribar; Jeff Svitak [images]- Salt Lake Tribune (Utah)

Comment: Mega-Church Meltdown: Financial problems may force Crystal Cathedral Ministries to sell architectural icons...If I were choosing, the Meier building would be the first on the block...Robert Schuller's son-in-law swears that there are no plans to sell any of the campus architecture. By David D'Arcy -- Richard Neutra; Philip Johnson; Richard Meier [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

The Melnikov house and the battle for the Soviet era's artistic soul: The family feuding and legal wrangles over the revolutionary architect Konstantin Melnikov's Moscow house may at last be coming to an end. And not a moment too soon...One of the great houses of the 20th century is at stake, and a piece of Moscow's soul. By Rowan Moore [slide show]- Observer (UK)

Design refinements needed on Marriott proposal: ...one of the more complex and unprecedented decisions the city has faced about the role that preservation should play in development ...It'd be a shame to tear down buildings of character to make room for something so lacking in it...As we consider sacrificing some of our city's built heritage...I would hope there'd be time made for additional design review and refinement. By Mary Louise Schumacher -- Kahler Slater [images]- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Little Red School and the Big Bad Wolf: When writing about architecture and preservation in Providence, a sense of the absurd comes in handy...Leading the attempt to huff and puff and tear the school down...a textbook example of the fox guarding the chicken coop. By David Brussat -- Angell & Swift (1901) [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Lofts Painted to Create an Illusion: ...lofts in a former garage near downtown Los Angeles, where the owner, Joseph Giovannini, has created murals that fool the eye into connecting distinct surfaces...There's an illusion "that I've painted space rather than painted walls." By Fred A. Bernstein [images]- New York Times

Restructuring Plans: Cecil Balmond talks about his recent decision to leave Arup for his own practice...balancing business concerns with creativity, and his thoughts on the next generation of architects. By Paul Makovsky -- Daniel Libeskind; OMA; Shigeru Ban; Alvaro Siza; Toyo Ito- Metropolis Magazine

All Tomorrow's Taxis: ...“Taxi of Tomorrow” competition...The bar wasn't set all that high...A look at the three finalists...They are also, well, dull. Boxy. Lacking in imagination...proposals by the artist and inventor Steven M. Johnson, a self-described conjurer of “ludicrous” ideas...But sometimes the wildest ideas result in the best solutions. By Allison Arieff [slide show]- New York Times

Mies van der Rohe nominees revealed: ...scores of projects nominated for this year's Mies van der Rohe Award, the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture. -- Caruso St John; David Lea and Pat Borer; Wiel Arets; Zaha Hadid; Office Kersten Geers David van Severen; 51n4E; Binq Architecten; Snelder Architecten; Philippe Schmit Architects; Archistudio Studniarek & Pilinkiewicz; Mecanoo; NORD- BD/Building Design (UK)

Architects battle for Design Museum Brit Insurance Design Awards: 14 schemes have been shortlisted for the architecture category... -- Caruso St John; Edward Cullinan; Wilkinson Eyre; Thomas Heatherwick; SOM; Herzog & de Meuron; MVRDV- BD/Building Design (UK)

Infographic: Designers, Should You Work for Free? Short answer: hell #\$%*ing no. (Unless it's for your mom.) [image]- Fast Company

Book Review: How New Urbanism's Case Triumphs Best Through "The Language of Towns & Cities: A Visual Dictionary" by Dhiru A. Thadani: His oversized reference charms, infuriates, and enlightens. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

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